

SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA MASTER PLAN

September 11, 2002



Scoping Report

SPUR CROSS RANCH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Public Involvement Summary Report Purpose.....	1
1.2	Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area Overview	1
1.3	Master Plan Process.....	1
2.0	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS	3
2.1	Public Involvement Process	3
2.1.1	Communication Outreach.....	3
	Press Releases and Announcements.....	3
	Project Website.....	4
	Project Database	4
	Project Newsletter.....	4
	Cave Creek Connection.....	4
	Project Fact Sheet.....	4
2.1.2	Involvement	4
	Joint Planning Committee.....	4
	Stakeholder Committee.....	5
	Trip Survey.....	5
	Open House/Public Meetings.....	5
	Comment Matrix.....	5
	Elected Official Interaction	6
3.0	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RESULTS	7
3.1	First Round of Meetings/Contacts Overview.....	7
3.1.1	JPC Kick-Off Meeting	7
	Issues	7
	Potential Strategies	7
3.1.2	Stakeholder Meeting #1.....	8
	Issues	8
	Potential Strategies	9
3.1.3	Community Open House #1	9
	Issues	9
	Potential Strategies	10
3.2	Trip Survey.....	10
3.3	Comment Analysis.....	12
3.3.1	Access.....	13
3.3.2	Public Safety	14
3.3.3	Trails.....	14
3.3.4	Archaeology	15
3.3.5	Public Relations.....	16



3.3.6	Environmental Protection	16
	Biological/Wildlife	16
	Soils	17
	Acoustic	17
	Land Use.....	17
	Cultural	17
	Mines.....	18
	Visual	18
	Water.....	18
	Recreation.....	18
3.3.7	General Information	19
	Trip Rating	20
	Services Requested.....	20
4.0	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REPORT SUMMARY	22
4.1	Discussion of Next Steps.....	22

APPENDIX

5.1	Public Involvement Plan
5.2	Public Notices
5.3	Joint Planning Committee Meeting #1 Summary Notes
5.4	Stakeholder Meeting #1
	Summary Notes
	Note Sheets from Meeting
	Stakeholder Database
5.5	Community Open House #1
	Summary Notes
	Note Sheets from Meeting
	Stakeholder Database
5.6	Project Newsletter
5.7	Trip Survey
5.8	Media Articles
5.9	General Written Comments (Letters)
5.10	Comment Matrix



Scoping Report SPUR CROSS RANCH

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Public Involvement Summary Report Purpose

After years of negotiating and planning, the master planning process has begun for the Spur Cross Ranch Conversation Area (SCRCA) Master Plan. From April 2002 through December 2003 a comprehensive public planning process will be implemented. The result of the process will be a Master Plan for the protection of the unique environment at SCRCA. The purpose of this report is to document the first phase of the public involvement process for the SCRCA Master Plan.

1.2 Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area Overview

SCRCA is a 2,155-acre site of primarily undeveloped native desert land. Past habitation includes the Maricopa Mine, former dude ranch, and former horse corral area. Significant features of the site include Elephant Mountain, rising to nearly 4,000 feet in elevation and Cave Creek at approximately 2,300 feet in elevation. The Tonto National Forest bounds the site along the north. Arizona State Trust land is adjacent to the site to the west and south. A separate 80-acre parcel of the former "Spur Cross Ranch" is located 0.5 mile south of the defined conservation area and south of Elephant Mountain.

SCRCA is a unique cultural and natural conservation area with a wealth of archaeological resources. The area

includes more than 100 archaeological sites including village sites, petroglyphs, and artifact scatters. Two historical sites reflect the late nineteenth and twentieth century mining activities. These cultural sites on SCRCA are important records for documenting and understanding the unwritten history of aboriginal occupation of the northern periphery of the Salt River Valley, as well as some early mining.

SCRCA was purchased from private interests to protect the area from impending development. The purchase was funded through resources provided by Arizona State Parks, Maricopa County, and the Town of Cave Creek. Maricopa County owns 70 percent and the Town of Cave Creek owns 30 percent of the area. The County has a 60-year agreement with the State and the Town to manage Spur Cross. The County and Town conveyed Deeds of Conservation Easement to the State of Arizona. This means that development rights were granted away, except for activities and improvements permitted by the Master Plan. The Conservation Easements are controlling legal documents. The County and Town have an Intergovernmental Agreement that outlines the specifics for funding and managing the operation of SCRCA.

1.3 Master Plan Process

In 2001, URS Corporation was hired by Maricopa County to prepare a comprehensive master plan for SCRCA. The Town of Cave Creek has funded the master planning effort and the process is being managed by a Joint Planning



Committee (JPC) composed of representatives from the three sponsoring agencies of the Town of Cave Creek, Maricopa County, and Arizona State Parks. The mission of the SCRCA Master Plan is as follows:

To protect and enhance the conservation area's archaeological, historical, and natural resources, including the integrity of its ecological processes, while providing opportunities for public day-use recreation and education.

SCRCA possesses exceptional cultural and environmental resources. It is to be developed as a county conservation area that has the underlying principle of protection and preservation. As a conservation area managed by Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, SCRCA will be managed to maximize those natural features and ecological processes unique to the area or for which the area was protected. Human uses of a conservation area typically will be non-consumptive and of short duration. Because it is a conservation area and not a preserve or a park, it will be managed primarily for protection of the resources, and secondarily for passive recreation. With effective management, the biotic diversity and ecological complexity of the conservation area should be expected to increase over time.

The key objective of the Master Plan is to evaluate how to maintain and restore the qualities of the SCRCA while allowing appropriate use. The process that will be

used is called Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC). The LAC system will be used to determine how change to the resource over time will be allowed to occur and determine the actions needed to control the change. The LAC planning process is a participatory process to determine what kind of wilderness or natural conditions that are acceptable and prescribe measurable actions to protect or achieve those identified conditions. The LAC process consists of the following four major components:

1. Identification of acceptable and achievable conditions
2. Analysis of current state vs. acceptable condition
3. Development of management action plan
4. Identification of monitoring and evaluation program

The LAC planning process will be used to evaluate SCRCA's current situation and the determination of the appropriate future condition. The evaluation results will assist in the determination of uses that will be acceptable within the area while achieving the ultimate goal of preserving its resources.



2.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

2.1 Public Involvement Process

The intent of the project is to develop a master plan for the protection, preservation, and development of SCRCA. The goal of the public involvement process is to create a participatory approach to reach a consensus on the SCRCA Master Plan. Ensuring that a broad base of public and stakeholder involvement opportunities occur on all community development-related projects is very important to the SCRCA Master Plan. The purpose of this public involvement plan is to outline the steps that the consultant team will take to ensure public and stakeholder involvement in the development of the SCRCA Master Plan.

Public involvement is a key component in the development of the recommendations that will have public and stakeholder support. The intent of the public involvement process is to ensure effective, early, and continuous public and stakeholder participation in the development of the SCRCA Master Plan. The public involvement plan is intended to meet and exceed the expectations by the sponsoring agencies for input into the design process of the SCRCA Master Plan project.

The framework for the public involvement process is a two-tiered approach. The first tier is communication outreach that is intended to keep residents, stakeholders,

and interested individuals or agencies up-to-date on the process and issues. The second tier, involvement, presents specific opportunities for residents, stakeholders, and interested individuals or agencies to actively participate in the design process and provide input or ideas.

2.1.1 Communication Outreach

The purpose of communication outreach is to ensure that people are aware of the process, issues being identified, and potential strategies as the master planning process evolves. The combination of the various communication techniques are to ensure that all interests were represented and that users of SCRCA as well as specific stakeholders and residents of Cave Creek and Maricopa County are kept informed. The techniques used during the process are defined below.

Press Releases and Announcements

Prior to all public events, press releases are being sent to all local and regional media. The purpose of the press releases is to announce upcoming meetings to ensure everyone has an opportunity to attend. The press releases augment the project newsletter and website announcements to ensure good representation by the various interests at community meetings. Additionally, a paid advertisement ran in the *Sonoran News* prior to the first public event to ensure that the process kick-off was effective. Press releases following all meetings are being distributed to explain the results of the public events.

Project Website

Maricopa County created a project website that has been promoted throughout the process (www.maricopa.gov/parks/spur_cross/default.asp). The web page announces upcoming public involvement events and presents information about the project.

Project Database

Working closely with the Town of Cave Creek, Maricopa County Parks, and Arizona State Parks, a comprehensive project database was developed. The database is used for all mailings related to the project. Interested individuals are able to request inclusion in the database and anyone attending any of the project events will be added to the database.

Project Newsletter

Four project newsletters are being created to inform interested residents, stakeholders, and agencies about the project. The comprehensive project database will be used to distribute the newsletter. Each newsletter focuses on a different theme and announces upcoming meetings and progress on the project.

Cave Creek Connection

The *Cave Creek Connection* is a newsletter published by the Town of Cave Creek to ensure good communication between Town government and its Citizens. The newsletter is distributed to all residents several times per year. Throughout the process, the *Cave Creek Connection* is used to communicate with residents about the SCRCA Master Plan process.

Project Fact Sheet

An SCRCA fact sheet was developed to explain the purpose and goals of the master planning process. The SCRCA fact sheet has been distributed at public events as well as at the Town of Cave Creek.

2.1.2 Involvement

The purpose of the second tier of the process has been to encourage a public dialogue about issues, concerns, and potential strategies for the Master Plan. The involvement approach focuses on Cave Creek residents, stakeholders, SCRCA users, various agency stakeholders (e.g., Forest Service or Arizona State Land Department), and current or potential users throughout Maricopa County. The goal of this tier is to provide a variety of meetings and survey instruments for the general public to provide their input. Additionally, input is received through committee work completed by the JPC and stakeholder group.

Joint Planning Committee

The JPC was formed to identify issues and possible solutions for the SCRCA Master Plan. The JPC includes representatives from the Town of Cave Creek, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, and Arizona State Parks Department. The JPC meets at least six times during the process to discuss critical issues and other key concepts that will be used to provide the foundation for the plan. Following is a tentative schedule for the meetings:

JPC Meeting #1	April 4, 2002
JPC Meeting #2	August 6, 2002



JPC Meeting #3	January 2003
JPC Meeting #4	June 2003
JPC Meeting #5	September 2003
JPC Meeting #6	December 2003

Stakeholder Committee

At the onset of the master planning process, a comprehensive stakeholder database was developed and from that list a stakeholder committee was organized. Three stakeholder committee meetings are being held throughout the process. The stakeholder committee acts as an advisory body to the JPC. The first stakeholder meeting was held June 13, 2002 and all individuals or agencies in the stakeholder database were invited to attend. Approximately 40 people attended the first stakeholder meeting. Following is a tentative schedule for the meetings:

Stakeholder Meeting #1	June 13, 2002
Stakeholder Meeting #2	January 2003
Stakeholder Meeting #3	August 2003

Trip Survey

The SCRCA trip survey is a one-page questionnaire for interested users in the area to provide their input on the project. The trip survey is available at the main gate at SCRCA and when the SCRCA supervisor leads hikes of the area he encourages everyone to complete the survey. The trip surveys are summarized and included in the comment matrix. The trip survey contains questions about SCRCA use and a map encouraging respondents to identify where they go when they travel to the area. To date (July 2002), 26 trip surveys have been received and analyzed.

Open House/Public Meetings

Community open houses/public meetings provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the SCRCA Master Plan's progress and provide input to the process. These meetings provide an opportunity for the public to speak informally with the consultant team, JPC, and staff about issues, concerns, or aspects of the Master Plan. Project display boards and graphics illustrating key elements of the Master Plan are presented. Input from participants is received via one-on-one discussions and survey questionnaires.

Four open house/public meetings are scheduled to be held during the project. Three will be held in the Town of Cave Creek and one will be duplicated at the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department's Central Avenue office. The proposed schedule for the open house/public meetings is as follows:

Open House/Public Meeting #1
June 24, 2002
Open House/Public Meeting #2
January 23, 2003
Open House/Public Meeting #3
August 4, 2003
Open House/Public Meeting #4
October 16, 2003

Comment Matrix

All comments received during public events, surveys/questionnaires, and one-on-one contacts by the public involvement coordinator are being tracked and logged into a comment matrix. The purpose of the comment matrix is to ensure that all



comments are registered, analyzed, and used to determine issues, concerns, and possible solutions. These public and stakeholder comments will be an important part of the mix of factors that will be used to develop the Master Plan.

Elected Official Interaction

The SCRCA Master Plan is a multi-jurisdictional project that requires close coordination with elected and appointed officials at the local, county, and state level. At key junctures throughout the process, work sessions with the Town Council and County Board of Supervisors will be conducted to gather input/direction on various aspects of the project. These comments will be compiled and included in the comment matrix.



Scoping Report

SPUR CROSS RANCH

3.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RESULTS

3.1 First Round of Meetings/Contacts Overview

The first round of activities included a JPC kick-off meeting, stakeholder meeting, and community open house. Additionally, trip surveys have been distributed and 26 collected to date (July 2002). Following is a brief summary of the meetings conducted. Complete meeting notes are included in the Appendix.

3.1.1 JPC Kick-Off Meeting

The JPC kick-off meeting was held on April 4, 2002 with 19 people in attendance. The kick-off meeting started at SCRCA with a tour of the area and then met for an hour at the Town of Cave Creek to discuss the project's process and issues.

Issues

Issues identified at this meeting include the following:

- SCRCA parking is needed (e.g., automobiles and horse trailers). The additional 38 acres that is being purchased is to meet this objective.
- Lead contamination at the Phoenix Mine site.
- Determining how the current and future concessionaires are handled is critical. Balance of revenues generated by SCRCA use vs. conservation of the site.

- Compatibility of users (e.g., pedestrians, hikers, and equestrian users).
- Opportunities for elderly and disabled individuals to visit SCRCA.
- Nitrate levels are high at the Jewel of Cave Creek.
- Leaching ponds in and around Silver Spur Mine. The mine had a cyanide spill in the early 1980s.
- Fire danger at the site.
- Historic value of the fences that were used for livestock and the building remains.
- Wildlife hazards due to the fences.
- Consider Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements.
- Liability issues must be investigated.
- Conflict regarding entrance fees between Maricopa County/Town of Cave Creek and the National Forest.
- Conflict regarding motorized access into the National Forest from SCRCA along the existing trail.
- Ongoing maintenance of SCRCA.
- Hikers' complaints of flies and odor by horses.
- Balance between areas kept protected vs. areas open to public use.
- Conflicts between individual horse use vs. commercial horse operations.
- Addressing the historic trails (e.g., those that Cave Creek residents have always used).

Potential Strategies

Potential strategies to address the issues raised include the following:

- Limit the number of jeep tours at one time.



- Provide dust control on jeep trails.
- Improve Spur Cross Ranch Road to assist in dust control.
- Consider restoring mesquite/hackberry plant communities where appropriate.
- Consider using volunteers for range management.
- Consider the reintroduction of big horn sheep where public viewing could be possible.
- Consider a Maricopa County park host during cooler months.
- Develop restroom facilities (e.g., compost toilet facility).
- Consider interpretive possibilities of reconstructing historic/cultural site or partial site.
- Determine appropriate preservation strategy for archaeological sites (e.g., Hohokam Village at 2nd Mesa Tabletop).
- Develop areas that provide shade (e.g., ramadas or natural shade settings).
- Provide information on kiosks or other type of site at SCRCA.
-

3.1.2 Stakeholder Meeting #1

The first stakeholder meeting was held on June 13, 2002 at the Town of Cave Creek Council Chambers. Thirty-six people in addition to the consultant team and staff attended the meeting. Invitations were distributed to approximately 80 stakeholders, including Native American communities, State agencies, user groups, and environmental interests. The purpose of the meeting was to gain an understanding of issues/concerns and possible strategies for managing SCRCA.

Issues

Issues identified at this meeting include the following:

- Parking on site currently is a clutter of vehicles.
- The Park Service model is ineffective in evaluating sensitivity of sites. Need to follow a new approach that is more respectful of the “footprints” of ancestors. Think of these locations as cemeteries.
- Citizens of Cave Creek pay for the purchase, planning, and ongoing maintenance of the site. Providing access to residents while conserving the site will be a difficult compromise to reach.
- SCRCA is part of an entire ecosystem (e.g., watershed) that must be considered.
- Many people in Cave Creek have the perception that SCRCA could be used as a recreational area.
- Many people do not believe motorized vehicles are appropriate on site while the jeep tour operations feel they can continue with some restrictions.
- Cave Creek has been charged with the public trust for this natural resource.
- Making SCRCA the end point for a large number of tourists is a problem.
- Human/wildlife conflicts and interaction.
- Tonto National Forest desires vehicular public access to their land.
- Jeep tours need to have access to the Forest Service land that is leased.
- Clean up of the various mines in or near the site.
- Fire danger at the site.



- Conflict between mountain bikers and hikers or equestrian uses.
- The area has tremendous acoustical resources.

Potential Strategies

Potential strategies to address the issues raised include the following:

- Develop parking for cars, horse trailers, and a corral.
- Mountain parking should remain on the east side of the site.
- Develop regional trail connections (e.g., from SCRCA to other trails region-wide).
- Accommodate the relocation of the Cave Creek Museum to the site.
- Conduct an assessment of how fragile the area is and determine impacts.
- Accommodate the continuation of mining with some level of regulations set.
- Provide hiking and equestrian trails.
- Work in partnership with the Forest Service to ensure that there is a smooth transition between SCRCA and the Tonto National Forest.
- Provide educational opportunities about the history of SCRCA as well as the approach that was used to acquire and manage the property.
- Address the removal of exotic species.
- Keep the road access to the Tonto National Forest in the way that it exists today.
- Explore alternative forms of transportation (e.g., shuttle bus from parking area to trailhead).
- Provide access for horses.

- Educate the public about the wildlife that might be in the area.
- Consider eco-tourism with limited access as an appropriate strategy for SCRCA.
- Control access to SCRCA for specific uses. However, it should not be like Karchner Caverns.
- Develop location criteria for cell towers.
- Do not allow hunting.
- Do not allow jeep tours.
- Allow jeep tours to continue in a sensitive way.

3.1.3 Community Open House #1

The first community open house was held on June 24, 2002 at the Town of Cave Creek Council Chambers. Sixty-eight people attended the event in addition to the consultant team and staff. The purpose of the meeting was to present the inventory of resources completed to date and solicit comments from the public on their issues/concerns and possible strategies. The public was able to review exhibits, write on SCRCA maps regarding how they use the area, present formal verbal comments, or submit written comments via a comment card and/or the trip survey.

Issues

Issues identified at this meeting include the following:

- Balance environmental protection with access to the area.
- Jeeps impact the horses.



- The access is a territorial road used to get back into the forest.
- It is not just an access issue but also an economic issue.
- Vandalism at the site.
- Defining acceptable impacts will be difficult.
- Residents of Cave Creek historically have had access through SCRCA to the Forest Service lands.
- Residents of Cave Creek want trails opened as soon as possible. There is a sense of entitlement.
- Balance between conserving sensitive sites and opening interim trails.
- The area is habitat sensitive.
- Ensuring adequate resources to support and maintain SCRCA.
- Determining what sites that access will be allowed vs. no access at all.
- Fire danger of the area.
- Balancing the public comments with the resource analysis in determining an appropriate plan.
- Consider limiting the number of vehicles per day.
- Provide trails with interpretive signage.
- Develop a comprehensive system and multi-use trails.
- Develop an interpretive center.
- Do not build a museum and visitors' center, as it would take away from the experience.
- Focus on education rather than recreation.
- Do not allow hunting.
- Develop a staging area at the entrance to SCRCA for horses.
- Consider habitat protection in the planning.
- Do not allow camping or overnight stays.
- Provide hiking and horseback riding trails via Spur Cross Road and Cottonwood Tank Trail.
- Reopen historic trails.
- Do not consider road improvements and controlled access to SCRCA.

Potential Strategies

Potential strategies to address the issues raised include the following:

- Consider a phased opening of the area. It could provide a good monitor of the impact to the site.
- Provide adequate parking.
- Ensure good informational signage.
- Do not allow motorized vehicles.
- Allow jeeps access.
- Make the main focus allowing equestrian trails.
- Consider a local horse patrol of the area.

3.2 Trip Survey

To better understand how SCRCA historically has and currently is being used, a trip survey was developed and distributed. The one-page questionnaire is available on-site for users of the area to complete. The SCRCA supervisor encourages participants of guided hikes to complete the survey. To date (July 2002), 26 trip surveys have been received and analyzed. Following is a summary of the responses. The comments made on the surveys are also included in the comment matrix and in Section 3.3, Comment Analysis.



How Often Do You Visit SCRCA?

Of all the respondents, 36.4 percent were visiting SCRCA for the first time. Visitors that responded that they visit less than once a month and more than once per month represented 31.8 percent each.

Was your visit guided?

Yes – 64.7% No – 35.3%

What time of day did you arrive at SCRCA?

Morning – 60%

Afternoon – 8%

Evening – 32%

How many people were in your group?

Under 5 – 52.6%

5 to 20 – 36.8%

Over 20 – 10.6%

Generally, how much time did you spend at SCRCA today or in the past?

Under 4 hours - 61.1%

Over 4 hours - 38.9%

How far did you travel to visit SCRCA?

The farthest someone drove was from Surprise at approximately 60 miles. Others came from Phoenix (19th Avenue and Dunlap), Chandler at approximately 40 miles, and many that were local residents.

WITHIN 5 MILES - 35.3%

6-20 miles - 11.8%

21-50 miles - 47.0%

50+ miles - 5.9%

What was your destination at SCRCA?

- Spur Cross Moonlight trip

- Cottonwood Wash
- Seven Springs
- Archaeological sites specifically Site 12
- Trail 4
- 6L Ranch
- Cottonwood Tanks
- 6 Bar Ranch
- Skull Mesa
- Tonto National Forest
- Jewel of the Creek

What type of activity did you participate in while at SCRCA?

Hiking – 72.2%

Mountain Bike – 4.1%

Equestrian – 16%

Motor Vehicle (Jeep Tour) – 0

Other –

Site Steward Visit – 4%

Mapping – 4%

How did you learn about SCRCA?

The majority of the respondents (40 percent) learned about SCRCA through the newspaper. The second highest way was due to the fact that they live locally.

Did the condition of the trails or roads affect your experience? If so, please explain.

This was an open-ended question that respondents could answer in any way. Seven respondents said that the condition of the trails or roads affected the experience. Some of the other responses include the following:

I like the natural trails.

Yes. We were on roads only – very rocky, not much fun. (Respondent was an Equestrian)



Fine condition.
 Yes. Road is dusty.
 Very challenging trail – this is why I come.
 (Respondent was a mountain biker)
 No. Dusty.
 Very Good.
 Yes. They're beautiful and easy to hike.
 It was great.
 Only positively.
 Very pleasant guided tour.

Overall, how would you rate your experience at SCRCA?

Excellent – 52.2%
 Very Good – 43.5%
 Good – 4.3%
 Poor – 0

What types of services would you like to see added to SCRCA?

The respondents were asked to select as many of the following list that applied. They also had an opportunity to add potential services under the category of "other."

Restrooms – 4
 Interpretation – 4
 Visitor Center – 4
 Water – 7
 Trails – 8
 Picnic Areas – 2
 Signs/Maps – 13
 Nothing – 5
 Other –
 Garbage cans near trailhead
 Car access to Gate #1 (e.g., Tonto National Forest)

3.3 Comment Analysis

The first phase of public involvement activities has been completed. As mentioned previously, a comprehensive comment matrix has been completed and included in the analysis of the issues received to date (July 2002). The number listed in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix. This reference number is provided so that the complete comments can be easily referenced in the comment matrix. The complete comment matrix is included in the Appendix. Also included below are the comments made at the JPC meeting, stakeholder meeting, and community open house discussed previously in this report. The categories used to sort the information received are as follows:

- Access
- Public Safety
- Trails
- Archaeology
- Public Relations
- Environmental Protection
- General Information

The Environmental Protection category was further divided into the following subcategories:

- Biological
- Soils
- Acoustical
- Land Use
- Cultural
- Mines
- Visual



- Water
- Recreation

3.3.1 Access

Access to trails is a primary consideration to maintaining the scenic integrity and cultural identity of SCRCA. In order to maintain and protect the environment, consideration of trails and their relationship to the environment will be critical to designing them. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- Access to trails is critical because the trails are no longer accessible by vehicle. (52)
- Private property owners require roadway access to their property. (64)
- Private property owners are actively pursuing an easement so they can access their ranch. (64)
- Maintain access to the forest by jeep tour operators. (67)
- DFLT supports as necessary the use of non-motorized traffic (e.g., administration purposes and emergency vehicles). (129)
- Limit people and vehicles. (142, Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Limit tour jeeps. (142, JPC Meeting #1)
- Suggest no outside vehicles west of the fence and very limited vehicular use past the gates. (142)
- Would like to have car access to Gate #1 (e.g., Tonto National Forest) and so on to the south end of Cave Creek Trail #4 so that a reasonable distance into the Cave Creek trail system can be done in one day. (145)
- The roads were very rocky and not much fun. (148)
- Parking is needed (e.g., automobiles and horse trailers). The additional 38 acres that is being purchased is to meet this objective. (JPC Meeting #1, Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Determining how the current and future concessionaires are handled is critical. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Access to the site for elderly and disabled. Consider ADA accessibility requirements. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Conflict regarding motorized access into the National Forest from SCRCA along the existing trail. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Improve Spur Cross Ranch Road to assist in dust control. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Many people do not believe motorized vehicles are appropriate on site while the jeep tour operators feel they can continue with some restrictions. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Tonto National Forest desires vehicular public access to their land. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Jeep tours need to have access to the Forest Service land that is leased. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Work in partnership with the Forest Service to ensure that there is a smooth transition between SCRCA and the Tonto National Forest. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Keep the road access to the Tonto National Forest in the way that it exists today. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)

- Explore alternative forms of transportation (e.g., shuttle bus from parking area to trailhead). (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Provide access for horses. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Eco-tourism with limited access might be an appropriate strategy for SCRCA. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Control access to SCRCA for specific uses. However, it should not be like Karchner Caverns. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Balance environmental protection with access to the area. (Open House #1)
- Jeeps impact the horses. (Open House #1)
- The access is on a territorial road used to get back into the forest. (Open House #1)
- It is not just an access issue but also an economic issue. (Open House #1)
- Residents of Cave Creek historically have had access through SCRCA to the Forest Service lands. (Open House #1)
- Determine to what sites access will be allowed vs. no access at all. (Open House #1)
- No road improvements and controlled access to SCRCA should be a part of the Master Plan. (Open House #1)
- Jeeps should be allowed access. (Open House #1)

3.3.2 Public Safety

Public safety is of utmost importance. It is important to develop partnerships with the Tonto National Forest, Rural Metro Fire Departments, and local citizens in case of emergency and in an effort to manage for

and plan initial attack fires. Informing and educating the public about proper desert travel and the potential of fire danger are on the top of the list of issues regarding public safety. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- Concerned about the amount of use at SCRCA and the fire danger. Is there a possibility of running a water line for fire hydrants at SCRCA? (66)
- Fire danger at the site. (JPC Meeting #1, Stakeholder Meeting #1, Open House #1)

3.3.3 Trails

Access to trails is a primary consideration to maintaining the scenic integrity and cultural identity of SCRCA. Consideration of trails and their relationship to environmental resources will be critical to designing them. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- Cave Creek residents that live on the west side of Cave Creek need to have connection to SCRCA via trails. These residents feel isolated from the rest of the Town of Cave Creek. (50)
- Like the loop trails. (52)
- The trail is very rough in the middle – same as ever. (118, 141)
- Very good condition of the trails or roads. (119, 139)
- The condition of the trails or roads did not impact the hiking experience. (120)
- Trails connections are critical. (123)



Scoping Report SPUR CROSS RANCH

- Effort should be made to identify the historic and appropriate trail locations, minimize the number of repetitious trails, and restore abandoned trails and other disturbed areas to ecologically healthy conditions. (129)
 - Condition of trails did not matter. (89, 131, 132, 133, 140, 145)
 - Would like to see more trails. (133, 140, 147, 148, Stakeholder Meeting #1)
 - Condition of trails or roads was not great. (134)
 - Condition of the trails/roads only affected experience positively. (135)
 - Condition of the trails/roads was great. (137)
 - Condition of the trails/roads was beautiful and an easy hike. (138)
 - Trails were dusty. (140)
 - Very challenging trail (Trail #4) – this is why I come. (141)
 - Condition of trails/roads affected experience by being dusty. (142)
 - The condition of the trails in Cave Creek raises questions about restrictions for horse use of trails. (142)
 - Condition of trails was fine. (143)
 - Like the natural trails. (149)
 - Hikers complain of flies and odor by horses. (JPC Meeting #1)
 - Addressing the historic trails (e.g., those that Cave Creek residents have always used). (JPC Meeting #1)
 - Dust control on jeep trails. (JPC Meeting #1)
 - Citizens of Cave Creek pay for the purchase, planning, and ongoing maintenance of the site. Providing access to residents while conserving the site will be a difficult compromise to reach. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
 - Conflict between mountain bikes and hikers or equestrian uses. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
 - Develop regional trail connections (e.g., from SCRCA to other trails region-wide). (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
 - Residents of Cave Creek want trails opened as soon as possible. There is a sense of entitlement. (Open House #1)
 - Balance between conserving sensitive sites and opening interim trails. (Open House #1)
 - The main focus should be to allow equestrian trails. (Open House #1)
 - Provide a trail with interpretative signage. (Open House #1)
 - Develop a comprehensive system and multi-use trails. (Open House #1)
 - Provide hiking and horseback riding trails via Spur Cross Road and Cottonwood Tank Trail. (Open House #1)
 - Historic trails should be reopened. (Open House #1)
 -
- ### 3.3.4 Archaeology
- SCRCA is home to a diverse array of archaeological resources that must be managed for preservation purposes. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*
- DFLT is supportive of managed protection of archaeological sites and suggests that any future archaeological

efforts take place under the direction of local and state archaeological programs. (129)

- Determine appropriate strategy for archaeological sites (e.g., Hohokam Village at 2nd Mesa Tabletop). (JPC Meeting #1)
- The Park Service model is ineffective in evaluating sensitivity of sites. Need to follow a new approach that is more respectful of the “footprints” of ancestors. Think of these locations as cemeteries. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Conduct an assessment of how fragile the area is and determine impacts. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)

3.3.5 Public Relations

Comments marked public relations in the comment matrix refer to individual contacts in developing the database, organizing the public meetings, press coordination, and confirmation of attendance at public meetings.

3.3.6 Environmental Protection

The primary environmental objective is to ensure that archaeological sites are preserved in their natural environment, while maintaining the integrity of the ecological processes. Consistent environmental protection and strategies to educate and inform the public about ways to help protect the land were identified. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

Environmental Protection was further subdivided into nine subcategories, as described below.

Biological/Wildlife

With limited modifications over time, SCRCA has preserved much of its biological diversity. Biological systems can be easily disrupted and are difficult to re-establish (e.g., management of exotic/invasive species.) Cave Creek Wash may be the only perennially flowing stream in Maricopa County, and it is a resource that should be studied and managed carefully. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- Active management of the biotic component of SCRCA should include the reintroduction of extirpated species and the re-establishment of ecological processes such as wetlands formation and, when appropriate, lightning-induced wildfires. (129)
- Wildlife hazards due to the fences. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Consider restoring mesquite/hackberry plant communities where appropriate. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Consider the reintroduction of big horn sheep where public viewing could be possible. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Human/wildlife conflicts and interaction. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Address the removal of exotic species. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Educate the public about the wildlife that might be in the area. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)



Scoping Report

SPUR CROSS RANCH

- Hunting should not be allowed. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- The area is habitat-sensitive. (Open House #1)
- Habitat protection should be taken into consideration in the planning. (Open House #1)

Soils

It is common to find contaminants (salts, nitrates, and pesticides) in Arizona's supply of shallow groundwater. Contamination of the ground (animal wastes) or surface (tailings) water at SCRCA also could degrade aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- No comments received.

Acoustic

Preserving a quiet environment is important so that future generations can continue to enjoy and experience the natural environment and sounds with limited human influence. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- The area has tremendous acoustical resources. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)

Land Use

Preserving natural areas within SCRCA will ensure that the scenic integrity remains unchanged. Consideration of trails and their relationship to environmental resources will be critical to designing them. Future population and

development growth surrounding SCRCA will need to be managed for the preservation of natural resources in relation to the projected growth. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- The future land use of the privately held 6.34-acre parcel near the south gate must be addressed. (64)
- Buy more land. (120, 140)
- Future impacts must be studied. (129)
- Planning needs to preserve the natural environment by limiting people and vehicles. (142)
- Compatibility of the users of the site must be addressed. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Balance between areas kept protected vs. areas open to public use. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Accommodate the relocation of the Cave Creek Museum to the site. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Camping or overnight stays should not be allowed. (Open House #1)

Cultural

An array of cultural resources exists within SCRCA. These sites are fragile, and must be managed for conservation purposes. Many sites are still preserved in their natural, or undisturbed environment. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- Some sensitive areas need to be protected. (123)



- Historic value of the fences that were used for livestock and the building remains. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Consider interpretive possibilities of reconstructing historic/cultural sites or partial sites. (JPC Meeting #1)

Mines

Controlling public access to the Maricopa Mine is a priority due to the likely presence of chemical and physical hazards. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- Privately held 20-acre patented mining claim on the north boundary of SCR. (64)
- Lead contamination at the Phoenix Mine site. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Leaching ponds in and around Silver Spur Mine. The mine had a cyanide spill in the early 1980s. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Need to clean up the various mines in or near the site. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Accommodate the continuation of mining with some level of regulations set. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)

Visual

Careful consideration of the location and impact of additional structures at SCRCA can help preserve the natural scenic integrity of the landscape. Siting of trails, a visitors' center, museum, and other facilities must be done in consideration of their visibility. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- No comments received.

Water

Groundwater is the source of perennial flow in Cave Creek; therefore, preservation of the existing groundwater flow to the creek is key to preserving the creek ecosystem. Without a perennial source of water biological and other aquatic life will be limited. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- Mention the Carefree sub-basin when discussing aquatic resources. (127)
- Nitrate levels are high at the Jewel of Cave Creek. (JPC Meeting #1)
- SCRCA is part of an entire ecosystem (e.g., watershed) that must be considered.

Recreation

The possible effects of recreational uses (e.g., equestrian, hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, jeep tours, hunting) will be considered. In order to maintain the scenic integrity and cultural identity of the land, it is necessary to examine all recreational activities and their effect on the land. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- Keep recreation use to protect the land. (146)
- Many people in Cave Creek have the perception that SCRCA could be used as a recreational area. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)



- Education rather than recreation should be the focus. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)

3.3.7 General Information

General comments regarding SCRCA are listed below. *The number in the parenthesis in the list below reflects the contact number from the comment matrix.*

- The process is taking too long. (64)
- Private landowners were told they would be involved in the planning process. (64)
- Services desired include restrooms, a visitors' center, trails, picnic areas, and signs/maps. (89)
- Found the hike very enjoyable and it is easy to see the beauty of the area and cannot wait until you open up more trails. (89)
- Provide explanation of goals/objectives of the Master Plan with reference to preservation restriction and/or the IGA. (129)
- DFLT supports the LAC concept. (129)
- A balanced management plan is critical for maintaining the delicate status of human impact and preservation. (129)
- Strategic planning must be used to prepare for the enhancement of education and environmental experiences. Research and preservation must be of the utmost importance as it relates to tourism. (129)
- Get it open. (131, 138)
- Do not want to see limits on visitation. (123)
- Maintain wilderness feel. (135)
- In favor of some jeep tours. (144, Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- It would be a shame to have a fee to get into SCRCA and then another fee to enter the Tonto. Hope you will work this out. (149)
- Education is not just bringing school children to the area, but for everyone to learn about the history, wildlife, and plants. SCRCA should be a working laboratory. (150)
- There should not be any four-wheeling at SCRCA. (150)
- Everyone who steps foot on SCRCA should be awe-inspired about the richness of the land. (150)
- Balance of the revenues generated by use of SCRCA vs. conservation of the site. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Liability issues must be investigated. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Conflict regarding entrance fees between Maricopa County/Town of Cave Creek and the National Forest. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Ongoing maintenance of SCRCA. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Consider using volunteers for range management. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Maricopa County could have a park host during cooler months. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Cave Creek has been charged with the public trust for this natural resource. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Making SCRCA the end point for a large number of tourists is a problem. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Develop parking for cars, horse trailers, and a corral. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)

- Parking should remain on the east side. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Provide educational opportunities about the history of SCRCA as well as the approach that was used to acquire and manage the property. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Develop location criteria for cell towers. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Jeep tours should not be allowed. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Jeep tours should be allowed to continue in a sensitive way. (Stakeholder Meeting #1)
- Vandalism at the site. (Open House #1)
- Defining acceptable impacts will be difficult. (Open House #1)
- Ensure adequate resources to support and maintain SCRCA. (Open House #1)
- Balance the public comments with the resource analysis in determining an appropriate plan. (Open House #1)
- Consider a phased opening of the area. It could provide a good monitor of the impact of the site. (Open House #1)
- Ensure good informational signage. (Open House #1)
- Motorized vehicles should not be allowed. (Open House #1)
- Consider a local horse patrol of the area. (Open House #1)
- Develop an interpretative center. (Open House #1)
- Building a museum and visitors' center would take away from the experience. (Open House #1)

- Develop a staging area at the entrance to SCRCA for horses. (Open House #1)

Trip Rating

- Rated the experience as very good. (130, 131, 133, 136, 142, 145, 146, 148)
- Rated the experience as excellent. (134, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 147, 149)

Services Requested

- Better directional signage needed. (89)
- Services desired include trails and signs/maps. (90, 143)
- Services desired are more signs/maps. (97)
- Would not like to see additional services developed. (118)
- Services desired – signs/maps. (119)
- Services desired – trails/signs. (120)
- Would like to see visitors' center, water, signs/maps. (130)
- Services would like to see include interpretation, water, and signs/maps. (131)
- Services desired include water and signs/maps. (133, 134)
- No services requested. (135, 141, 145, 147)
- Would like to see maps. (136)
- Would like to see picnic areas. (137)
- The experience was very enjoyable. Hope it stays this way. (137)
- Would like to see restrooms and water. (138)
- Would like to see signs/maps. (139, 140)



- Would like to see restrooms, interpretation, visitors' center, water, trails, and signs/maps. (144)
- Would like to see interpretation and trails. (146)
- Would like to see restrooms and garbage barrel near trailhead. (149)
- Restroom facilities (e.g., compost toilet facility) could be developed. (JPC Meeting #1)
- Develop areas that provide shade (e.g., ramadas or natural shade settings). (JPC Meeting #1)
- Provide information on kiosks or other type of site at SCRCA. (JPC Meeting #1)

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REPORT SUMMARY

4.1 Discussion of Next Steps

This report summarizes the public input received to date (July 2002). It is important to remember that the SCRCA design process is issue-based and not based on public consensus-building. However, public and stakeholder comments received are an important component among the factors that will define the appropriate plan for SCRCA. The documented public input will be weighed along with the complete data inventory

and analysis that is currently being completed. All of this information will be analyzed in order to determine appropriate strategies, techniques, and measurements for the management of SCRCA resources.

The second JPC meeting occurred August 6, 2002 to review the work completed to date and the public/stakeholder comments received. Another stakeholder meeting and public open house will be conducted in early 2003. Prior to these events, a project newsletter will be distributed and invitations sent to the database mailing list.



Scoping Report

SPUR CROSS RANCH